



**SGA Records Policy Disservice to  
Students, Conflicts with Laws** Pages 4&5

*The Underground*  
The Unofficial Student Publication of Missouri State University

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VOLUME 1; ISSUE 4





## Staff Editorial

## SGA needs independent auditor

After an extensive investigation into Student Government Association (see story on page 4-5), the lack of accountability SGA has shown to its constituents through negligent record keeping is very disturbing.

In fact, some of its practices may be in violation of Missouri's Sunshine Law, which requires government entities to make available information about their meetings and activities to the general public.

But rather than pointing fingers and placing blame, we instead are calling SGA to action.

It is time to appoint an independent SGA auditor, a person paid to assist in record keeping, but also given the authority to make sure SGA meets all open record requirements as spelled out in Missouri's Sunshine Law.

The independent auditor should also generate weekly reports about SGAs activities and provide them online for the students.

It is time to hold our governing body accountable for its actions. It is impossible for students to make accurate judgments concerning the performance of individual senators and SGA as a whole when simple documents like budgets, attendance, and voting records are either unavailable or incomplete.

SGA touts itself as the "official voice of the student body at Missouri State University," according to its website.

It is time for it to start acting the part and get its house in order with proper, responsible record keeping.

With the upcoming transition to a new administration, now is a perfect time for SGA to make the necessary changes and appoint an independent auditor.

-Zach Becker

For the Editorial Board



# Provost pays for charlatan tour on April Fools Day

Have you ever had a dream for your future? Do you want security and prosperity for yourself and your family?

Most people will discourage you, because the chance of failure is so great, but you are special. If you have faith in yourself and the commitment to see this journey to the end, you can overcome the odds. Also, I'm selling a book and audio CDs that reveals the secrets of how to get there, so you can have the benefit of overcoming the mistakes that I made.

Sound like a sales pitch? Actually, this is the bulk of the message from the speakers at the Extreme Entrepreneurship Tour, which came to the PSU Theater in the afternoon of April Fool's Day. The program started off, as many pitches do, with subtle promises. Did you know 80 percent of millionaires are entrepreneurs? That almost sounds like 80 percent of entrepreneurs are millionaires, so you can't lose! As entrepreneurs, the speakers on the tour only work with people they like. That almost sounds like all entrepreneurs only work with people they like!

Fun, not money, is the driving factor for the entrepreneurs we heard from. They showed a video of a guy playing with a yo-yo who had some kind of online business related to yo-yos. It left the impression that he played with yo-yos all day and money just poured out of the internet. The internet is the new vehicle of get rich quick schemes. I'm surprised one of the speakers wasn't selling a "Making money on eBay" CD.

The other domain of such schemes is real estate, represented at the tour in the person of Doug Fath, who created and sold two online distribution businesses while in college, and then got into real estate. He's never worked a salaried job since college, and he can show you how to get rich in real estate, using none of your own money. His system, contained in an 800 page binder and eight audio CDs, is valued at over \$2000. This is one of the guys the Provost paid, with our money, to come speak to us.

Fath described his philosophy to the



**Jason McGill**  
Assistant Editor

crowd in terms of cultivating assets, like owning rental properties, which generate passive income. It was largely lifted from Rich Dad, Poor Dad, the tremendously popular book by Robert Kiyosaki, with whom Fath said he was friends.

Fath told us to forget about working a job and concentrate on generating wealth. The core problem with that idea is confusing the ability to spend with being wealthy. People create wealth by doing work that adds value to society, such as building a house or caring for the sick. The so called passive income described by Fath actually destroys wealth because it transfers money to owners without adding value. Fath appears wealthy because he has a lot of money to spend, but he gets his money by siphoning it from people that actually work to create wealth.

For example, Fath described a recent property acquisition of his as a "win, win, win" because he was able to pay the scout that found the property, rent the property to someone, and generate \$2,200 of passive income for himself each month. He didn't go into detail about how it's a "win" for the renter. If he looked at that "win" in any detail, he would find that the renter actually lost. The renter has to pay \$2,200 a month extra, above the cost of renovations, for Fath's "service" of arranging for the renovations and Fath's risk in buying and marketing the property. Hardly a fair deal.

Nick Friedman, CEO of College Hunks Hauling Junk and another Tour speaker, described taking this extra money from customers as creating added value of the customer service experience. He realized early on in his business that he couldn't keep charging \$600 for junk hauling when his competitors were charging \$50. So Friedman created procedures that control

every action his employees take. The handbook tells them how to wear the uniform, how to groom themselves, how to address the customer, etc. All this effort enables Friedman to fool his customers into thinking that paying twelve times the price is a good deal for being treated like a human being.

But for an example of adding the value of the experience, the audience didn't have to look any farther than the stage. The Office of the Provost didn't respond to a request to find out how much of our tuition money was paid by the school to bring these charlatans to campus. From looking around myself, I estimated 200 students attended, meaning the price tag was easily in the range of tens of thousands of dollars. Should we be using tuition money to bring people to campus to hock books, CDs and subscriptions to websites, all promising riches for virtually no effort? Is this part of creating well-rounded, educated individuals?

Apparently it is, because several teachers offered extra credit for students to attend. Among the names of instructors I saw as offering extra credit were Lapraza and Haggard. What part of the show on Wednesday was part of a university curriculum? Shameless Exploitation of Desperate People 101?

Finally, one statement by Friedman struck me above all others as being particularly telling and particularly crass. His parting words were, "Those who do nothing, have nothing, and are nothing." My father was involved in several entrepreneurial ventures in the restaurant industry. We have been wealthy at times and flat broke at other times. During the rough parts, the whole family pulled together, and we worked our fingers to the bone for what little we had. To see a 25-year-old like Friedman, standing up there and implying that the billions of people in the world who work very hard for the little they have are 'doing nothing,' and as a result, 'are nothing,' was sickening. It highlights the undercurrent of arrogance running through the entire Extreme Entrepreneurship Tour.

## THE UNDERGROUND

**Mission:** *The Underground* strives to serve as a voice of integrity on the campus of Missouri State University. *The Underground* endeavors to comprehensively cover important events and issues on campus and to approach each article with honesty, accuracy, integrity, fairness and public service in mind.

**About Us:** *The Underground* is an independent student publication. Written and produced by a staff of student volunteers, *The Underground* is neither funded nor officially recognized by Missouri State University. It publishes once-a-month (on Wednesdays). The newspaper is distributed on the MSU campus and at select local businesses. The publication is also available online.

**Submissions:** Letters to the editor can be sent via email or postal mail. Letters must include name, address, class or title and telephone number for verification purposes. *The Underground* reserves the right to edit letters to the editor and publication is not guaranteed.

Each person is allowed one (1) copy of *The Underground*. Removal of multiple copies is considered theft.

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# My journey into the crazy world of unofficial college newspapers

I lost my job. My friends betrayed me. And I couldn't participate in my favorite (and only) activity.

To top it off, they keyed my just-repainted truck.

But through it all, I kept my integrity intact.

And as bad as that day was, it gave rise to one of the most fulfilling and enriching experiences of my life. Let me explain the details of how I got started out in this crazy independent college newspaperin' business.

It started my freshman year at Barton County Community College, where I had served as editor-in-chief of Barton's student newspaper.

The newspaper was special at Barton. We were consistently one of the top community college papers in the state and won many awards.

It was a student paper, but we aimed to be as professional as possible. In fact, in my one short year at Barton, we had conducted a successful investigation into fraud in the athletic department.

I guess we were a little too successful as investigative journalists, which led to an administrative attempt to censor our newspaper.

At the end of the year, they fired our faculty advisor for not blocking our investigation.

By the end of that year, I was disillusioned with the whole school and I just didn't want to stay at Barton any longer. I decided to transfer to Fort Hays State University, an hour away from my hometown of Great Bend.

First order of business was joining the school newspaper, *The University Leader*. I signed on as a copy editor and staff writer, earning a small salary.

Unfortunately, *The University Leader* was nothing like I hoped. The paper was probably at an all-time low in its 100-year history.

Sexual innuendo. Inside jokes. Obvious typographical errors. Erroneous reporting. Poor layout and design. And that was just in one issue.

From my first day on the job, it was painfully obvious – the majority of the staff just plain didn't care what was printed, as long as they kept getting paid.

While I respected the chain of command and tried to fit in as best I could, I frequently clashed with my superiors and co-workers over just about every area of the publication.



**Zach Becker**  
Editor-in-Chief

It all came to a head when our editor-in-chief decided to write a now-infamous (at least in Hays) opinion article entitled "What is proper penis etiquette?" It was an amazingly vulgar attempt at humor that, frankly, had no place in a college publication.

I argued vehemently with the editor-in-chief against publishing the article. I even told him I thought it could get him fired as editor. It turns out I was not far off.

Over my objections, the article made it to print and boy, did it cause a backlash. Readers were appalled, and several advertisers pulled their sponsorships.

Finally, the pitiful record of the school publication got the attention of the administrators. They found a technicality for which they could demote the editor-in-chief from his position.

At last, I thought, my chance to make things better. I would apply for the top position and hopefully turn the *Leader* around. I was the only person on staff with experience leading a newspaper. My chances looked good.

But things didn't quite work out that way.

Before the student publications board had time to start screening applicants for the position, our advisor summarily named an interim editor-in-chief.

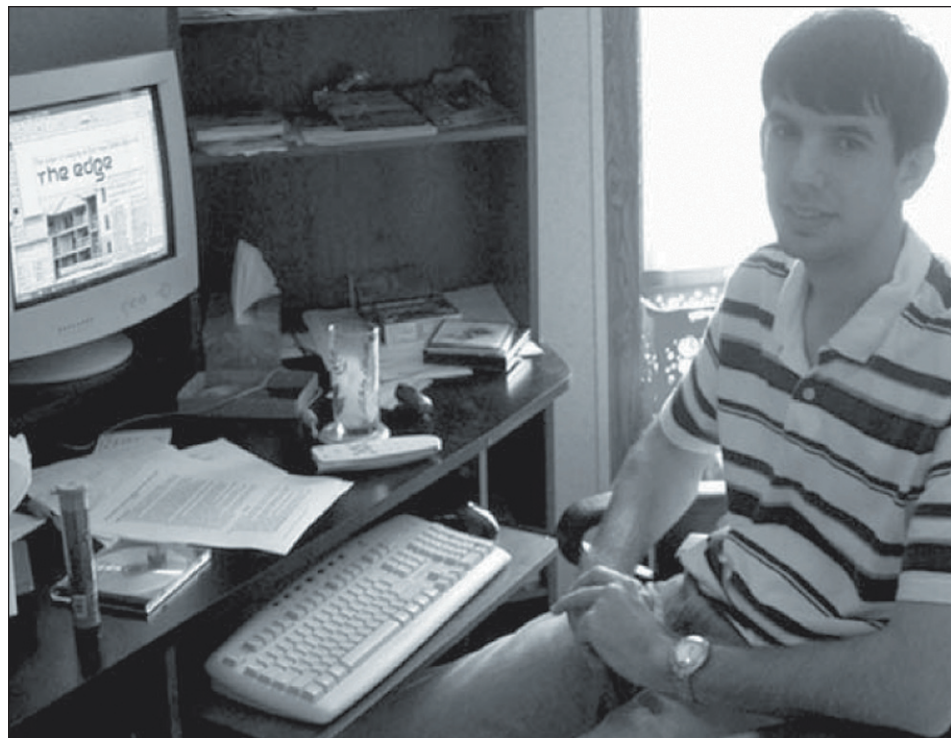
His first move as interim editor... eliminate the competition. He knew I'd be applying for the job and he wanted to cut me off. We'd disagreed in the past, but honestly, I considered him a friend.

Actually, I thought I was friends with almost everyone on staff. I was wrong.

They eventually found a trumped up reason to get rid of me. I had information I promised to keep confidential, and this interim editor wanted me to violate that trust.

When I took my dinner break during that same newspaper production night, I got a phone call from our new editor. He told me he never wanted to see me back at the paper until I told them what they wanted to know.

I told him I wouldn't breach my integrity and that he was an idiot. I was the most



In this May 2005 photo, Zach Becker works on the first issue of *The Edge* independent student newspaper at Fort Hays State University in Hays, Kansas. Becker would operate the paper for over 2 years.

dedicated person on staff and he would regret this decision.

So, our interim editor – in his first week in the position – didn't even have the guts to let me go in person.

Since they didn't actually have a real reason to fire me, however, I continued getting paychecks for doing nothing for the rest of the semester, so there was some upside, I guess.

But here was the real topping on the cake.

I had to go back to the college to work on a group project for a class that same night I got "fired."

I parked near the library, which happened to be close to the *Leader* office. As walked in, I passed one of my former co-workers at the *Leader*, who obviously noticed me.

When I returned to my truck, which had just been repainted a month earlier, someone had keyed it. Whether mere coincidence or not, it put an exclamation mark on a horrible day, so much so that I considered transferring again to another school.

A week or two later, I was at my grandparent's house eating dinner and discussing the whole situation. Then my uncle made a suggestion: why not start your own student

newspaper? No way. Not possible. It's a crazy idea...

But then, I started looking into it. Printing costs weren't as much as I thought. I had money saved up that the *Leader* was paying me for not coming to work. And I knew how to produce a newspaper from start to finish. Most of all, I was thoroughly motivated to kick the competition's butt.

Then, it needed a name: *The Edge*: The voice of integrity at Fort Hays State University. Best to put the intentions of the paper right on the top of page 1.

Now all I needed was a staff. Since I didn't have any money, they had to be volunteers.

I put up some fliers around campus and was amazed by the talented people that came forward to help out in many different areas without any financial compensation.

For the next two years, we kicked the *Leader*'s behind and forced them to improve in the process. They actually have a decent product now, at least last I saw.

*The Edge* and its staff won numerous awards from the Kansas Associated Collegiate Press, including a Bronze award for the overall publication, competing head-to-head with all the four-year, fully-funded college newspapers in the state.

It was an awesome ride. I met and worked with a lot of great people. And let's face it, it was nice to get sweet, sweet revenge.

You may wonder if I have as interesting a story to tell about starting *The Underground*.

Not exactly.

I had no axe to grind with *The Standard*. In fact, I do not even know anyone that works there.

My only interaction with them was at the beginning of the semester when I applied to be on staff at *The Standard*. Someone called me back and said they didn't currently have any open positions.

Bummer.

Then I started to think... Why not try it again, for old times' sake?

And so I put up some fliers, found some more talented, dedicated volunteers, and a new independent student newspaper was born: *The Underground*.

I hope you've enjoyed reading it.

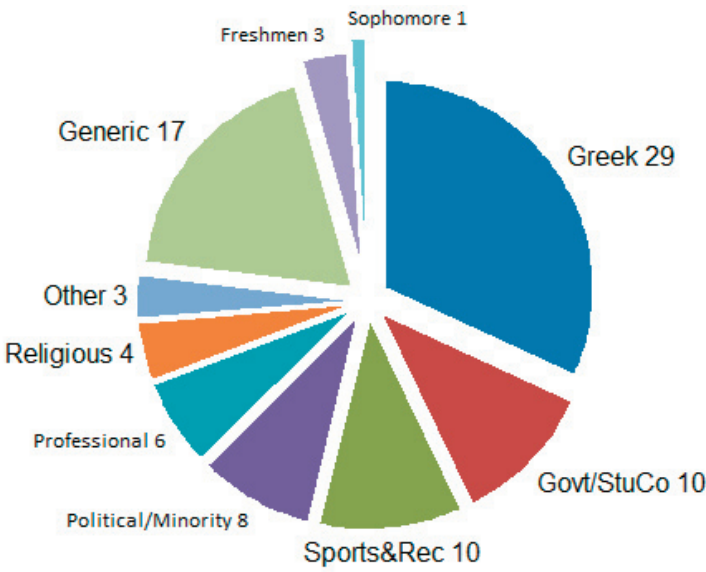


*Underground* contributor Nathanael Bassett, right, debates the finer points of journalism with assistant editor Jason McGill during production night for this issue of the paper.



# SGA Accountability?

## Breakdown of SGA senators by affiliation



## Former SGA Senator speaks out on issues

Jason McGill  
Assistant Editor

Nick Maddux, leader of the College Republicans and a former SGA Senator, said accountability is the number one issue that needs to be addressed in the Senate, and that a better system of accountability would help attract and retain quality Senators. “You have thirty or so Senators

that are good Senators, that do their office hours,” he said. “I’ll bet half the Senate doesn’t sit their office hours.”

Maddux said that he thinks some Senators use their position primarily to pad their resumes. “Not all, but some Senators speak out and raise motions just to make it look like they’re doing something,” he said.

## SGA Payroll

Expenditure	As of December 2008
Orlando Hodges	\$764.75
Tamila Greesham	\$477.15
Judith Rowland	\$472.16
Ashley Hoyer	\$442.24
Christopher Polley	\$370.74
Kristen Sanocki	\$239.40
Andrew Schussler	\$239.40
Jeffrey Faust	\$232.75
Christopher Triplett	\$181.21
Aaron Henry	\$133.00
Zachary Smith	\$133.00
Paul Mejia	\$121.36
Jonathan Stubblefield	\$69.83
Krystal Dreher	\$39.90
Whitney Paul	\$39.90
Total	\$3,956.79

“Our Senate is our accountability office.”  
-Ashley Hoyer  
SGA Chief of Staff

“Not all, but some Senators speak out and raise motions just to make it look like they’re doing something.”  
-Nick Maddux  
Former SGA Senator

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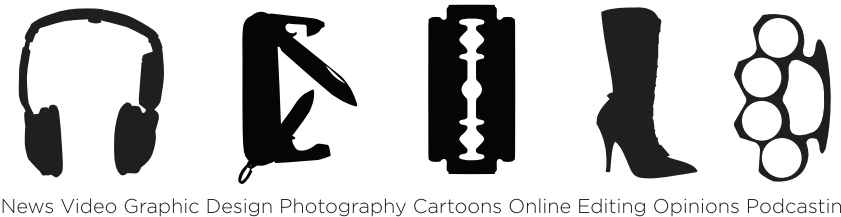


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## THE UNDERGROUND

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## 2008-2009 SGA Budget

4/6/2009

Accounts	Budget	Spent	Remaining
Payroll	\$16,000.00	\$3,956.79	\$12,043.21
Printing/Binding, Photos, Postage	\$1,400.00	\$335.23	\$1,064.77
Printing/Binding	\$1,125.00	\$0.00	\$1,125.00
Photos	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$250.00
Postage	\$25.00	\$0.00	\$25.00
Office Supplies	\$1,800.00	\$790.60	\$1,009.40
Software Purchase and Rental (Education)	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
SGA Promotion	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
Cabinet Budgets	\$6,500.00	\$3,588.34	\$2,911.66
Phone-Local and Long Distance	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
Local	\$2,400.00	\$0.00	\$2,400.00
Long Distance	\$100.00	\$0.00	\$100.00
Conference Services/Banquets	\$2,600.00	\$596.91	\$2,003.09
Sodexo (Food Services)	\$1,100.00	\$0.00	\$1,100.00
Rental of Facilities	\$1,500.00	\$0.00	\$1,500.00
Food for meetings	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
Conference Fees and Travel	\$6,500.00	\$672.80	\$5,827.20
Travel - In State	\$4,000.00	\$0.00	\$4,000.00
Travel - Out of State	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	\$2,500.00
Rewards/Prizes	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Reserves	\$8,243.00	\$0.00	\$8,243.00
Total	\$47,043.00	\$9,940.67	\$37,102.33

## Missouri’s Sunshine Law

610.011. Liberal construction of law to be public policy.

1. It is the public policy of this state that meetings, records, votes, actions, and deliberations of public governmental bodies be open to the public unless otherwise provided by law. Sections 610.010 to 610.200 shall be liberally construed and their exceptions strictly construed to promote this public policy.

2. Except as otherwise provided by law, all public meetings of public governmental bodies shall be open to the public as set forth in Section 610.020, all public records of public governmental bodies shall be open to the public for inspection and copying as set forth in sections 610.023 to 610.026, and all public votes of public governmental bodies shall be recorded as set forth in section 610.015.

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THE UNDERGROUND

The Unofficial Student Publication of Missouri State University

## Poor records leave SGA’s constituents in the dark

Jason McGill  
Assistant Editor

As the Student Government Association transitions into the 2009-2010 session, the new administration would do well to look into record-keeping practices at SGA that are at best suspicious and at worst illegal.

On February 23, *The Underground* requested SGA budget and attendance records going back to 2005, the year that SGA became wholly funded by student fees.

It took 18 days for SGA to produce this year’s budget, and no explanation for the delay was given outside of being busy.

The attendance information provided for the current year was incomplete, as it didn’t list the names or total number in attendance for many of the meetings.

Courtney Wendell, a junior and SGA’s director of public relations, referred reporters to the SGA archive in Meyer Library to obtain attendance and budget information from previous years. However, there were no recent attendance records on file, and the most recent complete budget in the archive dates back to 1993.

Missouri’s Sunshine Law states that all records of public governmental bodies, with certain explicit exceptions, shall be open to public inspection.

The law also mandates that such bodies appoint a custodian of records, who will respond within three business days in writing to any records request.

It also states that in the minutes of public meetings, a record of members both absent and present will be included.

Currently, SGA minutes do not include information on attendance.

Jon Stubblefield, sophomore and SGA’s sergeant-at-arms, said that sign-in sheets, the method of taking attendance at Senate meetings, are used primarily to track absences and determine if a quorum is present.

“When I first took on the position, I don’t know if I counted everyone in attendance,” Stubblefield said,

“When I first took on the position, I don’t know if I counted everyone in attendance, but since January I’ve had a numerical count.”

-Jon Stubblefield  
SGA Sergeant-at-Arms

“but since January I’ve had a numerical count.”

Overall attendance numbers and trends are not collected or reported to anyone.

Additionally, in the Bylaws of the Senate, Article I, Section 2, Paragraph A states that minutes will be available in the Senate office and, “on the SGA website no later than 5 p.m. one day prior to the next meeting.”

The minutes from February 17, 24 and from March 3 were not posted on the website until March 13.

As of press time, minutes from SGA meetings since March 3 are not on the website.

Far from a small matter, Article IV, Section 9, Paragraph D of the SGA Constitution states that SGA officers are subject to impeachment by the Senate for, “failure to uphold this constitution and its bylaws.”

SGA does not have a custodian of records position, but Ashley Hoyer, junior and SGA’s chief of staff, said that she is in charge of keeping records and uploading minutes to the website.

SGA has no equivalent to an inspector general or government accountability office, according to Hoyer.

“Our Senate is our accountability office,” she said. However, in the SGA Constitution, the Senate is not given the power to conduct investigations, compel witnesses, or audit records.

Without a complete record, nor a clear charge of responsibility for checking and auditing records, accountability becomes impossible.

For example, Wendell said there were significant decreases in the amount of payroll taken by the cabinet in the past couple of years.

“I’ve only taken six hours (of payroll) this semester. Whitney (Paul) works entirely for free,” Wendell said. As of December 2008,

salaries in the current budget accounted for 40 cents of the one dollar charge each student pays to support SGA. This is roughly in line with the amount spent in 1993 (thirty-nine percent).

But, without recent budgets to compare, it’s impossible to gauge how much progress is being made in saving money, or even whether Wendell’s statement is accurate.

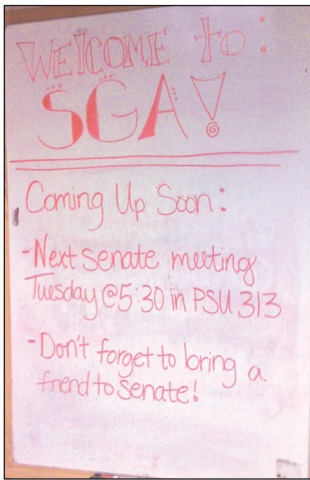
The SGA Senate Archival Act of 2009, passed on February 3 of this year, begins to address the problem of record keeping.

It mandates that all resolutions, memoranda, executive papers, and Campus Judicial Board decisions be delivered to the library archive and that all those documents from the current session and the past two sessions be available in SGA’s Document Management System, a computer based system.

However, attendance and voting records are not addressed in the act and neither are budgets.

There is also no mention of a system for organizing the records or summarizing their content, making it onerous for students or SGA members to sift meaningful information from the data.

The act does not create a system for handling open record requests, nor does it charge any officer or committee with investigating and auditing records.



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# Students organize Beer Club for connoisseurs

*Mike Donnelly*  
*Contributor*

Missouri State University has student organizations to suit every taste and interest. But what if you have a taste for, well...beer?

It may not be a university sponsored club (for various legal reasons) but the "Unofficial MSU Beer Club" is a place for beer enthusiasts to gather and share in the hops and good times.

"Beer club is all about beer advocates," said club president Kyle Snow. "I pretty much consider myself a beer connoisseur. So anyone who likes to try different beer...we come here and every week try one new beer."

Snow says that the club remains rather exclusive, and, in many ways is more about the social aspect more than the beer.

"We try to keep it a little smaller and try to find people that we either know or people that I'm sure aren't just coming just for the alcohol," Snow said.

Most of the members have their own special nicknames, such as DJ, known as

"Durr." Snow always says that he wishes to be referred to as "Kimmich," embracing his deep Irish lineage.

Of course, don't underestimate the beer club by any means. They are serious about what they do.

Snow proudly pulled out his beer rating chart. "You write down the name of the beer, where it's made, and then rate it on a scale of 1 to 10," he said. Listed on the chart are the names of several beers that the club had already taste tested, including Souza, Smithwicks, Sam Adams Irish Ale, and Mueller unfiltered wheat.

When asked about where he would like the "Unofficial MSU Beer Club" go in the near future, Snow says that he really wants to keep it simple and stick to the basics. "One thing I would like to see for the club, if I'm still here to see it, would be endorsement by the university as an official student organization, because I think what we do is pretty legit."

Either way, it doesn't look like the beer club will turn skunky anytime soon.



From left to right, Beer Club members Chris Kuhn, Justin White, Meagan Marsh (friend of the Beer Club), Johnathan "Durr" Stern and Kyle "Kimmich" Snow enjoy beers.

## Department shows opportunities of English degree

*Kristen Cypret*  
*Contributor*

April 1, 2009, was not a day just for fooling around.

English Society hosted one of its central programs in the Plaster Student Union on April 1, where they served cookies, soda, and delectable information.

Faculty members of the English department and other speakers discussed the possibilities of what a student can do with an English degree.

A total of six speakers made presentations, kicking off with junior Tyler Snodgrass.

Through poetry and pure humor, he set the ball rolling and entertained the students and

faculty that attended.

Tracey Glaessgen, academic advisor at the Advisement Center, followed with a spectacular presentation of her own.

She got to the heart of the issue, directly asking the students why they wanted to be English majors.

Many of the answers were vague, like, "I love to read. I love to write. It's all I can see myself doing."

Glaessgen challenged the students to think deeper. She said English is a gray major because there are so many channels that one can follow.

She emphasized the critical thinking skills English majors attained through their various literature and writing courses.

Danielle Evans, an instructor for the English department, followed with information about publishing and creative writing. Evans received an M.F.A. in Fiction from the Iowa Writer's Workshop.

Her short story, "Virgins," was published in The Best American Short Stories of 2008. She was also published in the Paris Review, Phoebe, Black Renaissance Noire, and the L Magazine. She discussed the ins and outs of publishing, shared her experiences of M.F.A. workshops, and described the sacrifices one must make as a creative writer. Evans also touched on editing and agent opportunities.

Technical writing followed, with a presentation by Lyn Gattis, an

assistant professor for the English department. Technical writing was described as the world of writing that's invisible, but that people see every day.

Technical writers are responsible for the labels on toothpaste, proposals in the corporate world, and all the important stuff people tend to overlook.

Gattis discussed job opportunities that are available to technical writers, and her advice was supported by the speaker that followed.

Robert Blevins, a graduate student at Missouri State University, gave a show and tell presentation of his position in college. "It's a lot of work. You are reading and

writing about twice as much as you did in undergrad," Blevins said. He discussed the big "GRE" and gave tips to proper preparation for it.

The event ended with an education section by Mara W. Cohen Ioannides, an instructor for the English department teaching professional writing. Her book, A Shout in the Sunshine, was published by the Jewish Publication Society in 2007. Besides discussing the facts of teaching English, she gave advice about what not to do as a graduate student. Ms. Ioannides advocated that, despite everything, English majors should love their jobs. If they don't, then they're in the wrong place.

## Talent show seeks student performers

*Kristen Cypret*  
*Contributor*

Hammons Hall Council will be hosting the Hammons Talent Show on Monday, April 27, in the Grand Lounge from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Students can still sign up at the front desk in Hammons House. The sheet asks how much time the performance will require and what kind of equipment will be needed.

Kameron Thull, who is the special events chair of the Hammons Executive Board, believes that people cannot afford to miss this event.

"We had an open mic last semester and lots of talented students showed up," Kameron said. "We had singers, poets, and a band."

She also gave an insight to how hard the executive board has been working. "We have been meeting weekly to discuss our plans and this one of our big programs," she said. "Any MSU students are welcome to sign up."

Prizes are still sketchy at this point, but she said that they will only be awarding first place and recognizing the second and third place winners.

## Students discuss new plus/minus grading

*Reporting by Kristen Cypret*

On June 20, 2008, the Board of Governors approved adding pluses and minuses to grades beginning in Fall 2009, including transfer grades that have pluses or minuses. Academic standards that require certain GPAs will not be affected. Prerequisites that require a "C" or higher will not be satisfied by a "C-" grade.

Faculty members can decide whether to use the plus/minus system. Students whose eligibility for scholarship renewal would be adversely affected by the new system will be able to appeal.

We asked a few MSU students their opinion on this subject.

### What do you think of plus/minus grading?

"I don't have much of an opinion. It might better represent how people actually score."

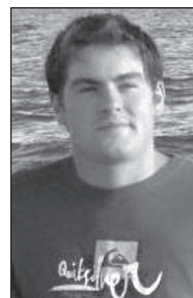
**-C.J. Leutkemeyer**

Junior  
Secondary Education

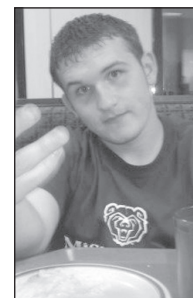
"I don't think it's a good idea. From what I know about it, it makes the really good students look like they're not as smart and it makes the not as smart students look better. As a whole, it makes our campus look better, but students with 4.0's must work much harder. It would make a three hour class so much harder. It's ridiculous."

**-Chad Statler**

Junior  
Digital Film Production



**Leutkemeyer**



**Statler**



**Brake**

"What is it? Uhm...I don't know."

**-Michelle Brake**

Freshman  
Undecided

"I don't feel either way. Having doesn't bother me and not having it doesn't bother me. I don't see it affecting my G.P.A. either way."

**-Justin Boker**

Freshman  
Middle School Education major



**Boker**



# The Surfboard *How to beat the recession*

## Websites worth visiting

Submit your own contributions by emailing us at [msu-underground@gmail.com](mailto:msu-underground@gmail.com).

<http://www.ratemyprofessors.com/> - This is an obvious one, but the reason it's printed here is because if more students remember to rate the teachers they take, whether they're boring, easy, hard or the most awesome professor ever, it would give others an idea of what they're getting into before they get there. A site like this could put some people out of a job if everyone used it, and it encourages good teaching.

<http://www.back2college.com/raisegpa.htm> - It's not too hard to figure out your own GPA and what you'll have if you get a few a's or b's, but this site takes the work out of it and also figures out what you need to average to raise your GPA to a good level. It's a great tool for figuring out what you need to accomplish ahead of time and how what you're doing now will affect your future.

<http://www.forgottenbooks.org/index.php> - Nerds searching for online texts, look here. Lots of weird, strange, old and historical texts for free online, from 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea to Zuni Folk Tales, with lots in between, including I Ching, Shakespeare, and Thomas Paine.

<http://www.befunky.com/> - Turn photos into drawings and videos into cartoons. Of course, you could do this with Photoshop as well.

<http://quikdine.com/ordering/restrnts/> - Want to get some food from a local restaurant, but too lazy to leave campus? Well, call these guys or order online and they'll pick your food up and deliver it to you. Get food from Chili's, China King, Macaroni Grill, Bandana's and even Hooters (but if they pick it up for you, what'd be the point of ordering from Hooters?).

Let's face it. The recession is here to stay for a while. Some people are even predicting a full-blown depression. What are you going to do about it?

You could throw your hands up in the air out of defeat, but what good would that do? Those hands could be busy working and earning you a living. Those hands could be busy helping bring this nation back to its feet. What good has giving up done anyone? It doesn't get anybody anywhere or do anybody any good. Instead, it only makes matters worse because the hands that could be rebuilding the economy are too busy flapping in the wind.

Another option would be to point fingers at whoever is to blame for this mess we're in. Well, that's still a hand occupied with something unproductive. Yeah, some people



**David Nichols**  
Contributor

messed up, and a lot of people did some very selfish and greedy things. But, as the old saying goes, "there's three fingers pointing back at you". Average Joe made just as many selfish mistakes as Big Brother and Mr. Corporation did. Enough finger pointing, let's put those idle hands to work.

Sitting on, pointing with, and tossing up hands in the air are all such a waste when so many hands are needed to rebuild the economy. The best thing we can do right now is to put those hands to use and do our part. Regardless of who's fault it is, it is now our collective responsibility to pull out of this mess. Start putting forth that extra effort at work, going the extra mile, volunteering, helping others, cutting back, enjoying the simpler things in life.

My grandfather grew up during the Great Depression. I've heard the stories about what people had to go through to simply survive. Thankfully, conditions aren't that bad yet, but what if they were? What if you knew that things are going to be that bad next year. Would you do anything different? Would you be more appreciative of what you have now?

Instead of complaining, giving up, or just sliding by; try putting in some extra effort at work. You might just save yourself from the next round of layoffs or even get a raise. Thinking about starting a business? Give it your best effort and distinguish yourself from the naysayers. Don't blame the economy for where you're at, prove that you can succeed at what you do despite the economy.

# Sports spending total waste of money

In one of my recent classes, a professor was relating a story from when he went to Missouri State. He said how in the beginning of the fall semester, his fraternity decided to show some school spirit by getting permission to light a bonfire between the old McDonald Hall Arena and what was then Briggs Stadium (now the Plaster Sports Complex). The reason for this was the football team; they hadn't managed a win yet and the frat pledged to keep a cauldron boiling in that space until they scored a win. By the time winter break rolled around, there was ice and snow all around the cauldron, and the frat gave up to a season of utter failure.

Now, some people love sports. I'll be honest and say it's not exactly my thing. When people get riled up and really enthusiastic about their favorite teams, it's probably a harmless way to occupy their time. But when it comes to school spirit, academia and a question of where we spend our money, there has to be an examination of the facts. Colleges often invest heavily in a sports program to raise the prestige of the school and attract students and sales of both tickets and merchandise. It's an investment in the lives of those involved and the future of the program, with returns of success, increased enrollment and profits. When those returns don't materialize, we have to

consider the other opportunities that exist by investing in quality programs and other methods that promote student success.

It's no small secret that the MSU football team has not been very successful recently; 4-7 this year, 6-5 last year and 2-8 the year before that. The men's basketball team has done a little better, going 11-20 this year, 17-16 last year and 22-11 the year before that. The women's basketball team loses about 2 games for every one they win. Now, big deal, right? Why am I trashing on these teams? Because of the inordinate amount of spending and money that goes into these things. According to a Cornell study, "indirect benefits to colleges from successful athletic programs are very small". Colleges that win championships have a three year spike in donations and applications. Another study by the NCAA itself says spending on athletics is a poor investment, with few financial returns. A few schools are very successful, and the rest aren't, but want to be, so there's a positional arms race, with different colleges trying to outspend each other, thinking that a few more bucks will make players perform better. There's a notion that a coach will emerge who can make everything better, and he deserves whatever we can pay him.

However, most successful sports teams are dynasties. People perceive random fluctua-



**Nate Bassett**  
Contributor

tions in the performance of any system to be patterns and find significance where there is none. This is why we try to recruit and hire the best, to build a dynasty of our own, and until it gets done right, or clicks, there's a lot of random performance. Back to the subject of money, let's take the Plaster Sports Complex (and ignore the much more powerful and costly example of the JQH Arena). It was originally a construction of the Works Progress Administration, part of FDR's means of employing the unemployed. It cost \$60,000, a costly sum for the day. Its last major renovation was in 1992, which made it the PSC that it is today. In 2006, they finished installing Field Turf synthetic grass for \$1 million. Last summer a Jumbotron system was installed at a cost of \$2 million.

Noam Chomsky says "Sports... offer people something to pay attention to that's of no importance. That keeps them from worrying about things that matter to their lives that they might have some idea of do-

ing something about. And... it's striking to see the intelligence that's used by ordinary people in discussions of sports as opposed to political and social issues."

If Missouri State is expecting a return on the investments they've made in sports, they've found themselves duped. Someone told me we threw away 1.3 million dollars last year on football (besides the jumbotron, I assume) Instead of continuing a costly "arms race" of sports spending on unrewarding ventures, why not decide to build an educational department that can stand out in the state and the nation? It seems unfair to waste tuition and alumni money on projects that don't give us our money back, when we could have said, "Let's have the best political science/biology/theater/whatever department in the state". As far as I know, MSU has nothing worth bragging about like SLU's nursing program or Mizzou's Journalism school. And that's because we've kept focusing our attention on something that Dr. Chomsky would call "training in irrational jingoism." We can read that as "defending bad ideas against all odds." That's certainly the motto of resource-sucking institutions like organized sports.

Today, we're keeping that bonfire burning, same as it was decades ago. This time, we're just throwing our tuition money on it.

# Online exclusives at [msu-underground.com](http://msu-underground.com)

## Misdirected anger

by Mike Courson

Bailing out banks and insurance companies doesn't seem to solve problems on a personal level. The new administration has a big challenge in the coming years.

## English Society and SAC greet famous writer

by Kristen Cypret

The Editor-in-Chief of the Mid-American review came to campus, and he had advice for MSU students.

## Freedom of (idiotic) speech

By Nate Bassett

We live in a great land of opportunity where we can say what we want, when we want, how we want. That doesn't mean your

ideas are any good or that people want to listen to you. So just because you can say it doesn't mean you should.

## Employment questionnaires leave me dumbstruck

By Zach Becker

Why do applications ask you questions like, "Have you ever stolen from a previous employer?"

If you're going to steal from them, don't you think you'd keep it a secret? Zach ponders the questionnaires used during the hiring process.

## Why comics run circles around the media

By Jason McGill

It's a lot easier to make fun of the news than report it. The Huff-

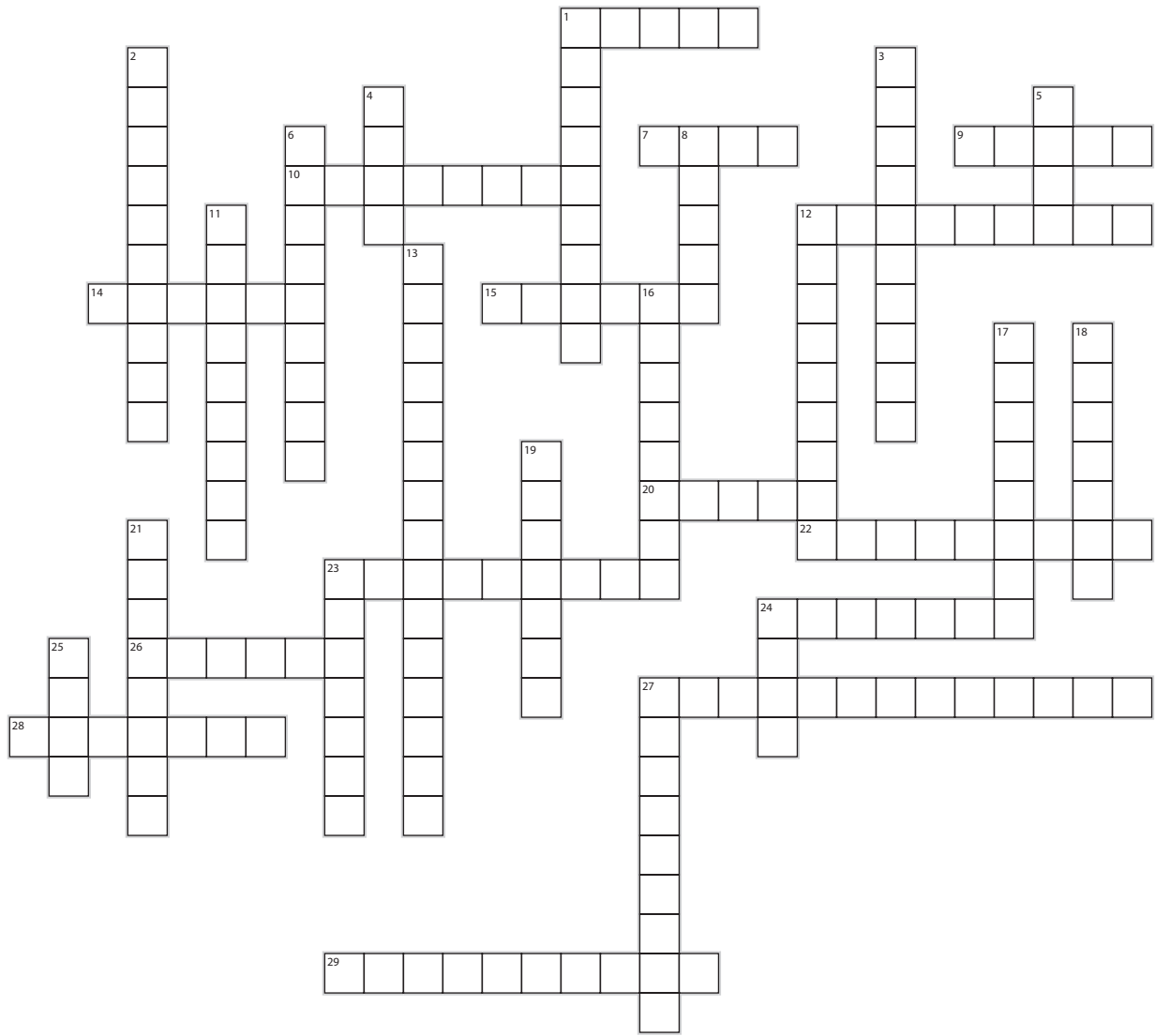
ington Post praises Jon Stuart for his CNBC coverage.

## And much more...

If you have stuff to complain about, like to ponder the issues, or enjoy telling others the ups and downs of MSU or Springfield, join our staff of bloggers at [www.msu-underground.com](http://www.msu-underground.com). Watch the site frequently for updates.



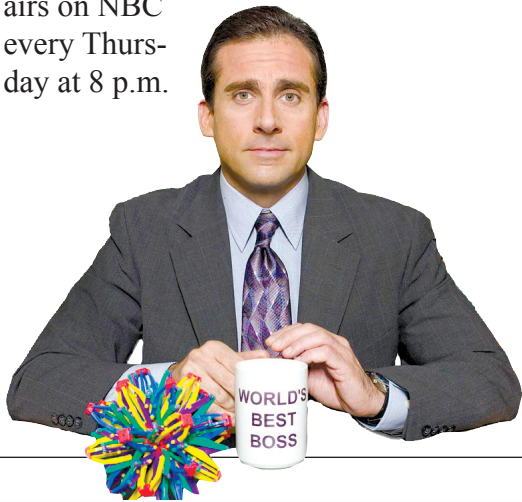
Classic Movie Trivia Crossword  
Part 2 of 3



- Across**
- 1. In Cool Hand Luke, Luke eats \_\_\_\_\_ eggs
  - 7. Actress starring opposite Cary Grant in An Affair to Remember
  - 9. She played a woman who “always depended on the kindness of strangers”
  - 10. Actress who plays the mother of Raymond Shaw in the 1962 film The Manchurian Candidate
  - 12. Director of the 1954 film Dial M for Murder
  - 14. He uttered the first line of audible dialogue in a feature length movie
  - 15. The title character of this 1950 film is an invisible, six foot tall rabbit
  - 20. This director makes his debut with the 1957 film 12 Angry Men
  - 22. John Carpenter directed this 1978 film named after a holiday
  - 23. This actress’s first starring role was as Mary in It’s a Wonderful Life
  - 24. Actor who played Minnesota Fats in The Hustler
  - 26. Actress playing Annie in Annie Hall
  - 27. In this film, Cary Grant describes Ralph Bellamy’s character by saying, “He looks like that actor...Ralph Bellamy!”
  - 28. De Niro’s character in Raging Bull
  - 29. This third film in the series catapulted 007 to success
- Down**
- 1. This 1968 film earned seven Oscar nominations. The musical of the same name got eight Tony nominations.
  - 2. In this film, “People come and go. Nothing ever happens.”
  - 3. She played Cora Smith in the 1946 film The Postman Always Rings Twice
  - 4. Director of 1927’s Metropolis
  - 5. At the end of Blazing Saddles, Jim and Bart ride off into the sunset in this
  - 6. This actor played the role that Russel Crowe played in the remake of 3:10 to Yuma
  - 8. Charles Kane’s first wife
  - 11. Dennis Hopper stars in and directs this 1969 film
  - 12. She wrote the novels that became the films Strangers on a Train and The Talented Mr. Ripley
  - 13. This retelling of The Tempest features the first screen appearance of Robby the Robot
  - 16. Woody Allen’s first film is a search for a recipe for this dish
  - 17. Composer who wrote the music for An American in Paris
  - 18. The Absent-Minded Professor creates this signature substance
  - 19. Director of the 1962 film Lolita
  - 21. Zeppo Marx’s last Marx Brothers film
  - 23. Actress playing Evelyn Mulwray in the 1974 film Chinatown
  - 24. Considered the last great MGM musical, it won Best Picture in 1958
  - 25. British POWs and Japanese soldiers build a bridge over this river in the 1957 film.
  - 27. He wrote the novel which became the 1962 film To Kill a Mockingbird



The Office  
airs on NBC  
every Thurs-  
day at 8 p.m.



Quote of  
the Day

“Presents are the best way to show someone how much you care. It is like this tangible thing that you can point to and say, ‘Hey man, I love you this many dollars-worth.’  
-Michael Scott  
Regional Manager  
Dunder Mifflin

Quick Mixer  
‘Liquid Nicotine’

- Ingredients:**
- 3 part amaretto
  - 1 part ground coffee
  - 1 part maple syrup

**Directions:**

Put coffee, then amaretto, and then maple syrup in a shot glass. The drink should look like a melted cigarette.

Source: [www.idrink.com](http://www.idrink.com)

